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MANUSCRIPTS IN THE LIBRARY OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge. By MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES. Cambridge: UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1913. pp. xx + 389.

THE Colleges and Halls of which the great English Universities consist generally possess old libraries of their own, including more or less important manuscript collections, apart from the University Library. For Oxford these were listed in Coxe's catalogue in 1852, the few Hebrew manuscripts being also included as an appendix in Neubauer's great catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Bodleian. Such a catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library is still wanting, Schiller-Szinessy's work only covering 72 out of 762 codices, to which now the Taylor-Schechter collection has been added (see E. N. Adler, *Transactions Jewish Hist. Soc. of England*, VIII, 12). About Hebrew manuscripts in the Colleges we have only W. Aldis Wright's appendix to Palmer's Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, which at that time (1870) possessed about thirty Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts. This collection, however, has been greatly increased lately, since we learn from C. D. Ginsburg's preface to the fourth volume of his *Massora*, that W. Aldis Wright had bought his collection of manuscripts and had arranged to bequeath it to Trinity. Ginsburg's collection consisted of about 100 volumes, partly described by Neubauer, *Letterbode*, XI, 157-65.

Since 1895 M. R. James, well known to many readers by his important contributions to the Apocryphal and Pseud-epigraphal literature, and as co-editor of *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich*, by Thomas Monmouth, the earliest case of the Blood accusation (see Joseph Jacobs, *JQR.*, IX, 748-55), has under-

taken the useful task of making all these various collections accessible by short and careful descriptions. We are indebted to him for a series of seventeen catalogues, some in several volumes, and, though in some cases he expressly restricts his work to the Western manuscripts of a college—even in those cases the few Hebraica are not excluded—his catalogues mostly describe the complete collections of the various colleges. The Hebrew manuscripts in these collections are of small importance: We find a Roman Mahzor for New Year's and the Day of Atonement in the Fitzwilliam Museum (No. 230 of the Catalogue of 1895); a copy of Prophets and Hagiographa in Gonville and Caius College (*Catalogue*, II, 1908, No. 404) of the thirteenth century, probably written in England for a Christian student, a conjecture partly anticipated by Bruns in his edition of Kennicott's *Dissertatio Generalis* (Braunschweig, 1783), pp. 377–8 to Codex 93; a complete Bible in three volumes in Emmanuel College (*Catalogue*, 1904, Nos. 5, 6, 7) acquired by Bishop Dr. William Bedell when chaplain of the English embassy at Venice, *c.* 1600, through Rabbi Leon [da Modena] 'the Chief Chaiham of the Synagogue there' with whose assistance he had, we learn, made great progress in Hebrew studies; Kennicott found the date 5045 = 1285 in the third volume; James finds in the illuminated title-page the work of a later artist, perhaps an Englishman; a couple of leaves of an old ritual, used for lining the cover of a Latin Isaiah with glosses in Pembroke College (*Catalogue*, 1905, No. 59) turned out to be a remnant of the old English ritual and was published in 1906 in the Jews' College Jubilee Volume pursuant to its discovery by James.

There are a number of items among the Latin manuscripts which are of considerable interest for Jewish literature. Steinschneider would have found very much interesting information for the translation literature. We find here a Latin Moreh in Trinity (*Catalogue*, III, 1902, No. 1412), no doubt the old translation discussed by Perles in 1875, which has been printed in Paris, 1520. Among medical treatises of the same author, two translations of Armengaud Blasii of Montpellier offer important

epigraphs supplementing Steinschneider's *Hebräische Übersetzungen*, pp. 765 and 767. MS. Gonville Caius (*Catalogue*, I, 1907, No. 178³, f. 165) states that Armengaud translated *liber moysis egyptii et de regimine egrorum et sanorum et specialiter de asinate* (Steinschneider corrects *asmate*) from the Arabic *mediante fideli interprete* in 1294 and published it—that seems to be the sense of *communicatur*—in 1302. Steinschneider's question (*Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 1905, vol. CLI, p. 33), whether this is the same translation as the *tractatus contra passionem asmatis* in a Peterhouse manuscript (*Catalogue*, 1899, No. 101⁴) is not answered by James. The latter text is preceded by Maimonides' tract on poison by the same translator, who states that he did the work in 1307 at the request of Pope Clement V.

A considerable number of astronomical and astrological treatises by Jews in Latin translations we meet in codex 1185 of Trinity College. The second of them, the *canones* of *Abraham Judeus salmanticensis*, i. e. Zacuto, are no doubt part of his printed Almanach perpetuus (Leiria, 1496) which Columbus used; the fourth has the *canones* of Jacob Poel, while Steinschneider, *l. c.*, 615, according to the Cat. MSS. Angliae of 1697 quotes MS. Thomas Gale as containing the tables of the Poel; possibly they are included in the fifth part of the codex, which ought to be compared with the Bodleian manuscript mentioned by Steinschneider. The tracts of Mashallah and Sahl ben Bishr (here in the usual corrupt forms Zebel and Zael) forming parts 10-12, 14-15, and 19-22 of the codex, if compared with the editions, may help to clear up the complicated bibliographical questions concerning the writings of these authors, of which Steinschneider treats in his *Arabische Literatur der Juden*, § 18-19. Several of these tracts occur in English translations in MS. Trinity College 1307. Similarly, we find copies of Isaac Israeli's medical works, mostly in Constantinus's version, and others; but, as far as I can see, they offer no points of special interest.

The last of James's Catalogues, which is under review here, is that of St. John's College, the one of which that great Christian

student of Rabbinic literature, Dr. Charles Taylor, was master for many years. While this College has more Hebrew manuscripts than any of the others, except Trinity, their number does not exceed four. Three of these belong to the oldest possessions of the College, having been given in 1546, and are described as numbers 1-3. The first of them contains a Pentateuch with Megillot, Job, Proverbs, and Haftarat, and was finished in 1260 according to the epigraph, which was printed in the *Hebräische Bibliographie*, XIX, p. 23 from Wickes's copy. James gives it in English translation. We learn from it that Samuel ha-Naḥdan pointed the manuscript for his brother (or friend, relation) Levi, and finished it Friday before the reading of **בִּי חֲצֹנָה**, i.e. August 20, 1260. Kennicott, overlooking this epigraph, judged the codex to be written in Spain in the early fifteenth century. The Naḥdan was either French or German. Neubauer, *RÉJ.*, IV, 15, note, identifies him with the martyr Samuel ben Eleazar of the Nürnberg Memorbook, who met his fate in Mosbach (Baden) in 1297, but this identification is, as Salfeld rightly remarks in his edition of the Martyrologium, pp. 283-4, still open to serious doubt. The manuscript was provided later with Latin headlines and chapter numbers. One cannot understand how the learned cataloguer could state: 'Evidently *written or* adapted for the use of a Western scholar, very likely a Franciscan'. The fact that the codex includes the Haftarat as well as its whole arrangement makes the first alternative very unlikely; the epigraph excludes it. On the other hand, Bruns, *l. c.*, p. 379 to cod. 96 suggests such an hypothesis for the second manuscript, containing the end of Judges (now wrongly bound at end of the codex), the rest of the Former and the Latter Prophets, and he believes that this manuscript and that of Gonville and Caius College mentioned above were copied from one another.

MS. 3 is of much greater value; it is a copy of Rashi's commentary on Prophets and Hagiographa from the first half of the thirteenth century; the date is not quite clear to me: 'on the day before the New Year at the end of the year of the fifth thousand' probably reads in Hebrew **עֶרֶב רִאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה בְּסוֹף שָׁנַת ה' אֲלָפִים**, i.e.

August 31, 1239 (not 1238). Is Samuel ben Isaac, who sold the book to Nathaniel ben Jacob, the scribe or the man for whom it was written?

The commentary on the last eight chapters of Job and on Chronicles, which, as is well known, are not by Rashi, ought to be examined. If Darmesteter, when in England to examine the French glosses in the Rashi manuscripts, had known of this codex, he would not have spoken of the Rashi manuscripts at Cambridge as all of recent date and offering no interest; see his *Reliques scientifiques*, I, p. 115.

Codex 218 contains a copy of Kimḥi's ספר השרשים on vellum of the thirteenth century. The Hebrew scribble at the end of MS. 78, a collection of medical works in Latin translations, probably is due to the fact that the volume once belonged to a Jewish physician. Perhaps he wrote there some recipes.

In what language the *Dominica oratio hebraice* (?) in cod. 189 on the flyleaf is, which begins: 'Abba hay consiran mel odenson epitre aemalatre', and ends: 'Adass sabilo naia se be le', I do not know.

In the Index, p. 372, under Bible Hebrew, No. 114 is also recorded, but it contains Jerome's version of the Psalter of the Hebrew. We miss the reference to the Hebrew letters on fol. 180 b of No. 107. Such lists we also find in several other catalogues of James; see e.g. Corpus Christi, No. 2, fol. 278, No. 48; Pembroke, No. 174; Gonville and Caius, No. 601, fol. 310 b, partly with French, &c.

Of other items of Jewish interest, besides Latin Bibles and Apocrypha, we find a Latin Josephus, two copies of Petrus Alphonsus, *contra Iudaeos*, and some translations of Isaac Israeli's medical works.

Perhaps I may add the 'ludi pulcherimi Salamonis quos mandauit Regine Acrys nobilissime domine quos fecit rex salamon filius regis dauid pulciores quos poterit pro requestu predictae domine', fols. 70-75 of No. 155 (cp. also MS. Trinity 1081, fol. 128).

Like all its predecessors, the volume begins with a short

history of the collection, lists of former owners, &c. As there were no early catalogues of the collection, and that of 1843 follows the present arrangement, like James's, there was no occasion for comparative tables with earlier numbers found in most of the other catalogues of James. Altogether 502 manuscripts are described on 368 pages; 267 of them which are mediaeval are dealt with more fully on 318 pages; to the more recent ones, 'for the most part of very slight importance', only 50 pages are given. From an introductory note to the latter (p. 319) we learn that the Oriental manuscripts outside of the Hebrew ones were excluded from the catalogue. The volume concludes with a good index. Dr. James is to be congratulated on the successful completion of his series of catalogues, which, as can be seen from these remarks, offer some interesting information even for our field of studies.

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